

**DRAFT**  
**TOWN OF DARIEN**  
**COMMISSION ON AGING**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**MARCH 16, 2011**

**ATTENDANCE:** Joseph Pankowski, Chair; Jennifer Geddes, Vice Chair; Ron Heinbaugh, Mary McCarthy, Pat Morgan, Amy Squyres, Tom Valentino, Robin Woods

**ABSENT:** Charlie England

**OTHERS:** Beth Paris, Senior Center Coordinator; Olive Hauser, Director of Social Services; Jayme Stevenson, Selectmen's Liaison to the COA

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Pankowski called to order the regular meeting at 9:07 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MINUTES**

The following correction was made to the Minutes:

Page 2, third line up from bottom, change *Darien* to *Democratic*

**\*\* MS. GEDDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY MINUTES AS CORRECTED.**

**\*\* MR. HEINBAUGH SECONDED.**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**SENIOR CENTER REPORT**

Ms. Paris gave her report as follows:

- Ninety-five people have signed up for the St. Patrick's Day celebration which includes lunch, lecture and sing-along.
- Four-part Caregiver series will commence on April 20 and the following three consecutive Wednesday evenings. Speakers have been selected. The first topic is on Alzheimer's.
- Living Well program already has many signed up.

Ms. Paris reported that there has been a continuation of problems at the Center. Recently, lights shorted and the electrician determined that the boxes are old and the wires are brittle.

Discussion followed on Ms. Paris' efforts to work on writing an evacuation plan should there be an emergency at the Senior Center. Ms. Stevenson expressed surprise that no plan was in place up to this point. Ms. Paris said that she has office help from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. who can assist her in case of

an emergency. She stated that no instructions are posted for emergencies. There are lighted Exit signs. Mr. Pankowski suggested that she work with Sue Swiatek on this matter. Ms. Hauser inquired if the carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working. Ms. Paris stated that the batteries were changed recently. She then said there are sprinklers in the kitchen only. FD Securities is coming mid-April to evaluate the Center.

Please refer to the attached report for additional Senior Center news items.

### **SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT**

Ms. Hauser said that Gallivant is going to use the car on a trial basis on Saturdays. She asked if the board knows of someone who is willing to drive for 7-8 hours at \$15 hourly. She said that no special driver's license is required. A municipal matching grant will cover this expense.

The Renter's Rebate program for the disabled and elderly has about 30-40 people getting assistance.

Assistance for oil ended on March 15. Ms. Hauser said that if there is a need, people can still apply.

The Household Closet has been popular among the residents, she said. It contains paper goods, soaps, deodorants, sponges, hygiene items, etc. Once monthly, a resident can pick up supplies. Donations of money and supplies are always welcome as this program is for everyone. However, an income test is necessary to qualify for assistance.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Pankowski addressed the tax burden on seniors that was raised by Mr. Valentino. He asked Mr. Valentino to prepare a letter, and it will be reviewed by the board at next month's meeting.

Mr. Pankowski reported that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) met with the Board of Finance (BOF) and requested \$120,000 for drawings. The drawings will be of the Library and Board of Education (BOE) space that will be presented to the RTM in April. The BOF approved the request. The full funding for the architectural work is in excess of \$300,000. Mr. Pankowski said that in May the bonding of the project will be addressed. Mr. Pankowski then said that there are four distinct groups who have taken a position opposing the shuffle as follows: 1) 35 Leroy to be used for affordable housing, or sell it; 2) Leave Senior Center 'as is'; 3) No shuffle, but 35 Leroy to be the Senior Center; 4) Both the Senior Center and BOE at Town Hall. The latter was noted by a BOF member.

The RTM members who were contacted by COA Board members expressed the following:

- 1) Agree with the plan;
- 2) Need more information to make a decision;
- 3) Feel positive about it;
- 4) Oppose.

Ms. Hauser said that there are too many opinions which will lead some to want to do nothing. Too many ideas can cause confusion. Mr. Pankowski said that the better way to communicate on this topic is to talk in person rather than by e-mail. Ms. Squyres suggested that each of the four groups should be

addressed separately. She mentioned that if the BOE moves to the library, to some, it could mean that more staff will be hired to fill up the space. Mr. Valentino said that this discussion would be a good one to view on Channel 79.

Ms. Woods discussed the Focus Groups that are planned by the architect. All of the aforementioned groups will be included in them beginning at the end of March. Mr. Norm Guimond will be a part of this.

The Board agreed that the space within the Senior Center needs to have multiple uses, including use by other groups when the seniors are not using the space. Ms. Stevenson said that the seniors do need to integrate with other segments of the Darien population. Ms. Paris said that in twenty-five years or so there will be even more seniors. Every Town investment should be accessible to all residents. She reiterated that many still doubt the number of registered seniors who come to the Center, and the volume of guests that attend events there. Some Board members feel that many people believe what they want to, and can't be swayed, and others find that this situation is political.

Ms. Stevenson stated that 35 Leroy Avenue cannot be expanded, and that parking at the old library is inadequate. She also said that crossing Leroy Avenue is unsafe.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Squyres stated that at a recent Board of Directors' meeting of Gallivant and Aging in Place, they voted to combine both organizations as one.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. McCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**  
**\*\* MS. MORGAN SECONDED.**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.

*Next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, April 20, 2011, at 9:00 a.m., Room 119, Darien Town Hall.*

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hohlweck,  
Recording Secretary

Attachment (Senior Center Report)

Senior Center Report  
Commission on Aging  
March 16, 2011  
Respectfully submitted: Beth Paris, Center Coordinator

Program Survey and Renewal of Membership results will be completed by the end of March 2011. Held SWCAA Senior Center Forum at Center 9 of the 14 Senior Center Directors attended as well as Executive Director of SWCAA Marie Allen and Program Coordinator Gretchen James. Discussions focused on grant money being cut significantly to the State. All regional Area Agencies on Aging are focusing on how to redistribute the funds. Grant process may be too cumbersome considering the amount of funds. Area Agencies are also looking at themselves as an educational resource and gap filler of services for each particular community. Schedule is packed with new Health and Wellness Programs and this month we begin 3 class collaboration with Norwalk Community College Life Time Learner Series.

Ongoing Work in Progress: Compiling Policy Manual  
Developing Fire Plan  
4 Part Caregiver Series w/ Alzheimer's Association  
Membership/Survey Completion  
Monthly Newsletter/Publicity

Building Projects: Re-Organized Craft Closet Storage  
Re- Organized Gift Shop  
Changed Bingo Room set up for multi purpose use  
Identified Fire Pull Box and Labeled Zones  
Grease Trap Inspections and Procedure\*

March Program Highlights: 1<sup>st</sup> Artist Alive w/Harriet Lacker (6 classes in series)  
1<sup>st</sup> Chinese Brush Painting (6 classes in series)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Flower Arranging Darien Garden Club  
7<sup>th</sup> Blood Pressure (back to 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of Month)  
7<sup>th</sup> Pharmacist Presentation Q & A on Acid Reflux  
8<sup>th</sup> History Lecture on "Causes of the Civil War" Phil Lechak  
14<sup>th</sup> Infection Control in Hospitals (Nurse by Your Side LLC)  
14<sup>th</sup> Caregiver Educational Support Group  
14<sup>th</sup> New Release Movie  
16<sup>th</sup> St Patrick's Day Luncheon lecture & sing a long  
17<sup>th</sup> A Talk on Ireland by Carolyn Lewis  
18<sup>th</sup> Long Term Care Insurance Presentation  
24<sup>th</sup>- 25<sup>th</sup> Lifetime Learners Classes Begin  
29<sup>th</sup> Sleep Apnea Program with Dr Leonard Kundel

Meetings: March 8<sup>th</sup> AIP Networking Meeting at Senior Center: SWCAA Advisory Board March 9<sup>th</sup> at the Jewish Home for the Elderly in Fairfield; Aging in Place Board Meeting March 21<sup>st</sup> at the Center; March 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Alzheimer's Conference

**Building Issues this month:**

**Fire Alarm** went off Zone 14 which is Kitchen area. Needed to Label Zones throughout building contacted FD Securities and wrote -fire plan pending approval from Fire Marshall.

**3Toilets** sprung leaks-in 1 office area no part existed for repair entire flush meter replaced

2 Between movie room and library seal is gone entire toilet needs to be removed from wall and replaced piping is so rusted that holds them on and the are interconnected between the wall-no time table on this repair bathrooms remain **closed**.

**Replaced:** insulation and ceiling tiles in custodial closet where ceiling fell

**Ocon:** called in for Mice

**Light Fixtures:** in kitchen were replaced bulbs could no longer be unscrewed without breaking dome covering

**White Pine Tree:** taken down in back area...Parks and Rec. cleaned up all the debris